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 ORE - Special Staff Papers -
 Miscellaneous

20 September 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, REPORTS AND ESTIMATES
 FROM: Members of the Special Staff.
 SUBJECT: Status of Special Staff Operations.

1. The Special Staff of the AD/ORE was charged initially with the responsibility for preparing reports and estimates connected with the crisis arising out of the Korean incident. In interpreting that mission the Staff did not limit itself to problems directly concerning Korea, but it re-examined Soviet policy in other areas in the light of the Korean affair. In pursuit of this objective the Staff has prepared, or taken cognizance of, papers on the implications of the Korean attack, possible Soviet courses of action with respect to Taiwan, Indochina, Japan, Berlin, Iran, Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey. It has examined the Soviet capability to take the risk of global war, has examined reaction to a possible US initiation of global war, and it is currently examining Sino-Soviet relations, a crucial question in the analysis of possible Far Eastern developments.

2. Development of the Korean affair and the reactions of the Soviet and non-Soviet nations thereto indicate that the incident in Korea is bound to have continuing repercussions on US foreign and domestic policy, as well as upon the foreign and domestic policies of the USSR and all other nations. This fact suggests that the planning and writing of estimates should be continued on a staff basis, but that this should be done outside the limitations of framework within which the Special Staff began its operations.

3. The following general conclusions regarding the planning and writing of estimates emerge from the experience of the Special Staff:

a. It is essential to maintain close contact between the NSC Staff, Department of State, JCS, and other consumers of estimates on the one hand and the personnel planning and writing the estimates on the other hand.

b. It is necessary to have certain operational data and information on US and Allied capabilities and vulnerability in order to formulate definitive estimates.

c. The formulation of a useful program of intelligence production involves, not only an understanding of the problems of US policy-makers, but continuing discussion and oral exploration

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 Item 41

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of various US problems and policy, a regular review of new information, and an assiduous effort to avoid incestuous thinking by an appreciation of departmental preoccupations and of the special viewpoints of regional experts.

d. Estimates should be written by the Staff rather than by the personnel charged with research responsibility. In each case where the Special Staff directed the preparation of draft estimates in the divisions it was necessary for the Staff to rewrite the estimate completely.

e. Operation 64 in particular demonstrated that (1) usefully comprehensive and authoritative papers necessarily involve the resources of more than one division, (2) the method of establishing specific task forces without regard to divisional lines was an effective device for preparing research reports, (3) the most useful reports were those which presented pertinent specific facts in analytical form, (4) the draft estimate itself can best be written by a staff group with knowledge of the policy-makers problems, (5) the needed participation of OSI created problems on the inter-office level, (6) a useful contribution to the final estimate was made through the participation of regional division chiefs sitting with the Special Staff as an estimates staff.

f. Although the contributions from the divisions in the form of draft estimates have been generally unsatisfactory, relations with the chiefs of divisions have been most satisfactory when they participated in the final formulation of the estimate. This procedure, however, has two inevitable counterparts: (1) it slows down the production of estimates, and (2) it makes the Special Staff a junior staff functioning as a drafting unit subordinate to an unofficial board of estimates made up of the division chiefs.

4. In view of all of the above considerations, it appears desirable that definitive action be consciously and advisedly taken with reference to the estimating function in ORE. Several alternatives present themselves (until such time as the new DCI makes a decision regarding the ultimate organization and procedures for the formulation of national intelligence estimates):

a. Permit the existing Special Staff to continue, but to define its mission in such terms as to make clear that (1) its cognizance covers the entire US intelligence problem, (2) it is a junior staff charged with initiating and preparing draft estimates, and (3) the chiefs of divisions will act as a senior staff charged with approval of both the initial statement of the problem and the final estimate.

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b. Abolish the Special Staff, return some of its members to their original assignments and assign others to D/GI or D/Pub to strengthen the existing organizations charged with inter-regional problems and with the initiation and coordination of research projects and estimates.

c. Create an official estimates staff and authorize it to exercise control over all ORE functions and to write all estimates. Such a staff should consist of the present chiefs of certain existing divisions and other qualified personnel, who would be relieved from divisional responsibilities. It would institute a formal staff organization by the assignment of personnel to specific staff functions and could utilize certain existing functional divisions (D/Ge and D/Pub) as arms for the administration of the research program and the editing and processing of reports. This alternative strikes closest to the kind of wholesale change which lies within the prerogative of the new DCI; with certain modifications, however, it could be put into effect without the appearance of attempting to restrict the freedom of action of the new administration.

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